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SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

September 15, 2022

And the Mighty Waters Roared

by Rev. Kim Wood

“When the rains began to fall in Jackson, Mississippi on August 22, the floodgates of injustice broke wide open. For several days, the skies dumped precipitation on the city, pushing the Pearl River, which runs through Jackson, to its limits. The shores gave way to the water, streets and some buildings began to flood, and the city broke. Literally, the city’s water infrastructure gave way and water pressure plummeted, coming to a complete halt in many parts of Mississippi’s capital.



While it would be easy to blame the water crisis in Jackson on an abundance of torrential rains, the reality is that the crisis was there long before these most recent storms. In fact, residents had been on a boil order since July, a frequent occurrence. Unsafe water is not a new thing in Jackson, MS. In fact, it is not a new thing in cities and towns across the U.S., particularly in areas with a high percentage of people with black and brown skin and significant low-income ratios. Water and sewer, as well as other vital infrastructure systems are often ignored and left to deteriorate, even after they reach crisis levels. Benton Harbor, MI; Mount Vernon, NY; Kern County, CA; and many U.S. tribal communities are plagued with unsafe water. And, of course, the Flint, MI water crisis has been in the news for several years now, and still, residents wait for a consistent response and comprehensive solution.

In Jackson, where the percentage of people who are black, brown, indigenous, of Asian descent is near 85% and the poverty rate is 24.5%, we

cannot ignore that decades of warnings and requests for funding to create safe living space and compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 have been swept aside while funds and attentiveness to infrastructure system needs have flowed much more readily to primarily white, mid-high income.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to respond to the immediate needs of our siblings who are in crisis in Jackson. If you can help with volunteer efforts, or if you would like to make a financial contribution toward efforts that the UCC and our ecumenical partners, working with the Mississippi VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), please connect in the following ways:

- Volunteer Information
email kwood@secucc.org
call 404-615-2492
- Financial Donations
Online - <https://www.secucc.org> – DONATE (note that your contribution is for Jackson Water Crisis
By Mail - Post Office Box 1950, Decatur, Georgia 30031-1950.

And while we respond with care and compassion to the people living in substandard and dangerous conditions in Jackson right now, let us not lose sight of God's call for justice. Only when we work to alleviate disparity and change the systems that perpetuate inequity and marginalization can there be a Just Peace.

News from the Conference Office

From the Generosity Coordinator

by Min. Carrole Moss

Greetings and blessings, "GENTLE REMINDER"... our FISCAL YEAR ends September 30, 2022. If you are a FISCAL year contributor, please don't miss the date. Our OCWM year end is January 12, 2023.

We remain grateful for all the ways you bless this SECUCC. Every contribution, conversation, prayer, and all acts of kindness are so appreciated!! THANK YOU!!

Acts 20:35 teaches: "In all things, I have shown you that by working hard I. This way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE'."

May the Lord God continue to bless you REAL GOOD. Peace and blessings... as we continue to journey...TOGETHER.



Clergy Zoom Connections for September

- **An Hour of Conversations and Prayer**
Tuesday, September 20, 27 - 11:00 a.m. Eastern (10:00 a.m. Central); Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/479440102>
 - **Live Harp Meditations for Ministers**
Thursday, September 15 - 1:00 p.m. Eastern (12:00 noon Central)
20 minutes of meditation with Celtic harp. Silent prayer and reflection following if desired, facilitated by Rev. Jean Norton.
Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/96976838422>
 - **Especially for Specialized Ministers**
Tuesday, September 27 - 9:30 a.m. Eastern (8:30 a.m. Central)
Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/354744689>
-



Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2022. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

Week of September 18

- Church of the Savior; Knoxville, Tennessee
- Gregg Carlson
- Douglas Hunt
- Susan Webeler

Week of September 25

- Liberty Congregational Christian UCC; Brantley, Alabama
- Jeremy Rutledge
- Bob Hurst
- Cindy Barto

Churches in Transition

First Congregational, Savannah GA; Trinity Congregational, Athens AL; Holy Trinity Community Church, Nashville TN; First United Church, Belvidere TN; Pleasant Hill Community Church, Pleasant Hill TN; Deer Lodge Congregational Church, Deer Lodge TN; Brookemeade Congregational, Nashville TN; Rush Memorial, Atlanta GA; Sandy Creek, Lafayette AL

News from Our Local Congregations



Upper Room UCC Fellowship in Nashville is Sat, Sep 17

After two years without meeting due to COVID, the Upper Room UCC Fellowship in Nashville resumes! It will be a catered COVID-safe brunch under a big tent with fans. Bring family & friends for great UCC fellowship & inspiration! Our Conference minister Rev. Kim Wood will be a special guest speaker as well as Rev. Robert Hall from Howard Congregational & Gavin Warren from Holy Trinity. It is an event you won't want to miss! [Learn more on the HTCC website.](#)

News from the Wider Church

TODAY: Lunch and Learn with the Southern Region

September 15, 2022: 12:00 – 1:00 PM EDT

Topic: What is Christian Nationalism

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84176821060>

Sign on a few minutes early as we'll start right at noon eastern time. We'll listen together to a podcast from **Christians Against Christian Nationalism** while eating lunch at our various desks and other places and will follow up with 30 minutes of conversation and discussion. Come and go as you wish.

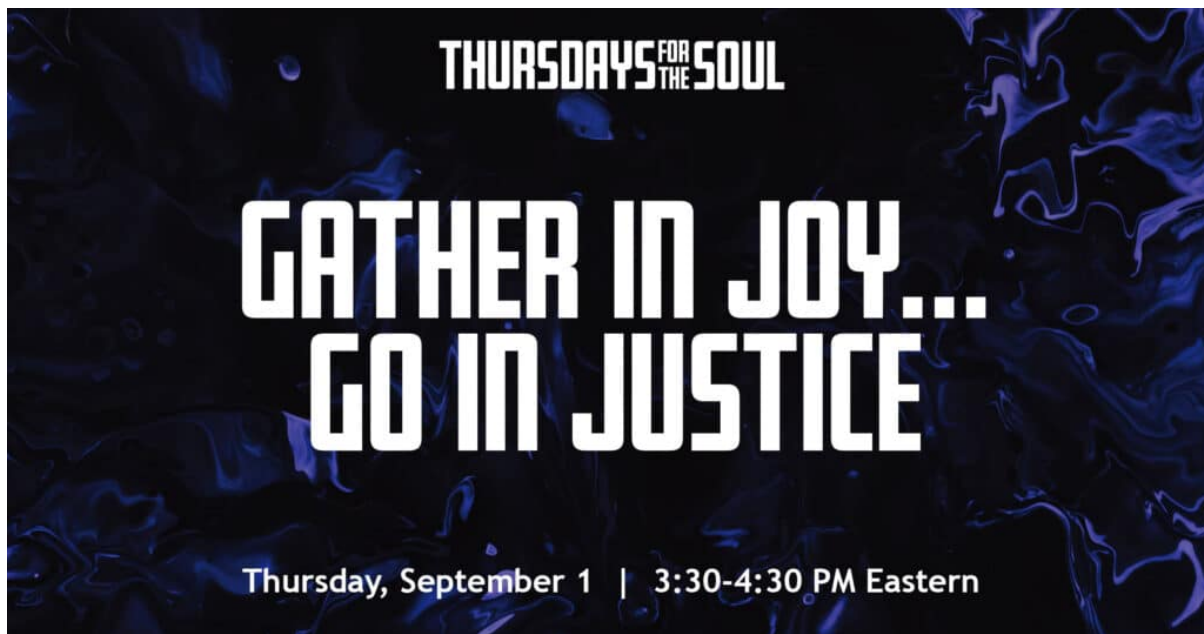
The Podcast this time: Christian leaders on Christian nationalism

Amanda Tyler talks with five Christian leaders who are taking a stand against the dangerous ideology of Christian nationalism: Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), the Rev. Dr. Paul Baxley (Cooperative Baptist Fellowship), Diane Randall (Friends Committee on National Legislation), Sister Simone Campbell (NETWORK Lobby), and the Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Haggray (American Baptist Home Mission Societies).

TODAY: How to Grow A Movement: Invest to End Racism

September 15, 2022; 7:00 PM EDT

Join the UCC National Setting as we kick off the historic Join the Movement Capital Campaign with co-chairs Otis Moss III, Naomi Washington-Leapheart, and Starsky Wilson sharing their visions of a church and a world moving toward fuller embodiments of racial justice. On the 59th anniversary of 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama that galvanized movements to end segregation and establish civil rights, we come together to remember and discover how our sharing of resources can fuel and grow our racial justice work today and for generations to come.



Joy and Justice in the UCC

Several conference ministers, including SECUCC Conference Minister Rev. Kim Wood, were asked to respond to this question for the September 1,

2022 edition of **Thursdays for the Soul**: “Where do you find the Spirit moving in joy and justice among the congregations in your conference?”

To watch Rev. Wood and others as they share reflections from their own conferences, click on <https://youtu.be/1BmLhrb56o8>.

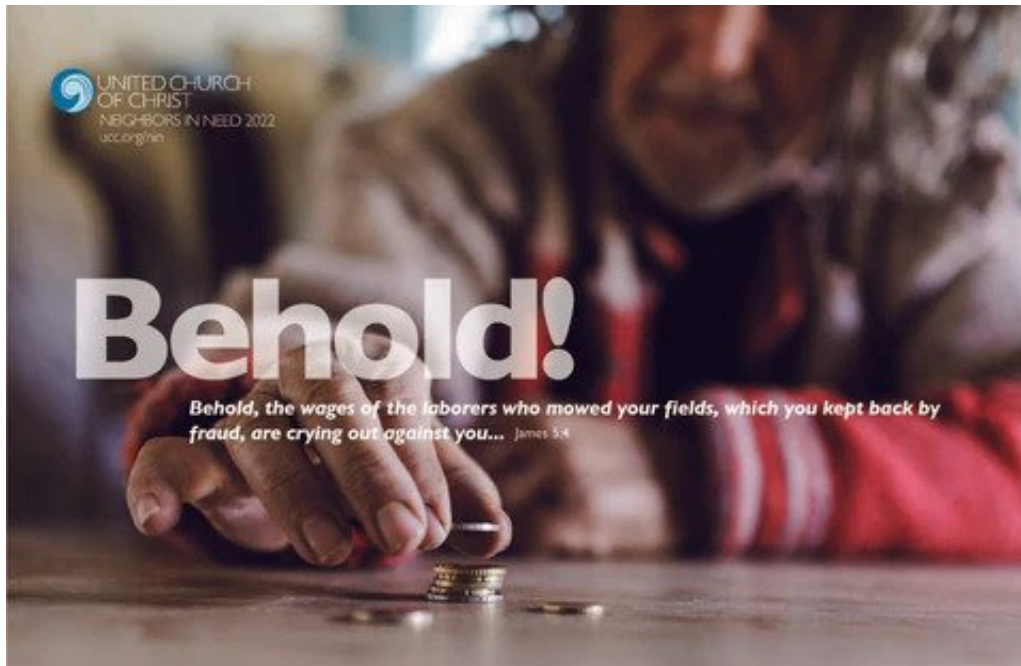
Thursdays for the Soul, which airs each Thursday from 3:30-4:30 PM Eastern Time, is “a webinar series to care for the whole church. Topics are wide-ranging and are focused on the spirituality and care of people.” Register for free at ucc.org.

Thursdays for the Soul is yet another way your OCWM dollars are at work.

New CWS Period Packs, Backpacks are UCC Match Grant-eligible

[Church World Service](#) has two new Kits: Welcome Backpacks and Period (Menstrual Hygiene) Packs. And UCC congregations assembling them and all other CWS Kits may [apply to the UCC for \\$250 Match Grants](#). The grant is to help them stretch their own contributions of these essential supplies.

Made to specification, [CWS Kits](#) have the recipients in mind, whether [Welcome Backpacks](#) for refugees or asylum seekers who’ve just arrived in the United States, [Period Packs](#) for people who cannot afford or access menstrual hygiene supplies, [Emergency Cleanup Buckets](#) for domestic and international disaster survivors beginning their recovery process, [Hygiene Kits](#) for people caught in violence, natural disaster or poverty, or [School Kits](#) for school children who lack basic supplies.



Neighbors in Need 2022 Campaign

The Neighbors in Need "BEHOLD!" offering focuses on economic justice. With inflation impacting all of our households, we wanted to provide a way to discuss this topic through a faith lens.

Join us by promoting this year's campaign at your church. Explore the promotional toolkit, which contains a four-week bible study, coloring book, three posters, social media banners, and a leader's guide. These materials will assist you in planning and carrying out the 2022 NIN campaign.

Most churches will collect the offering on October 2nd, 2022, as a part of World Communion Sunday, but contributions can be made at any time.

[Learn more from UCC Resources.](#)

Pension Boards Active on Climate and ESG

As summer draws to a close, the Pension Boards continues to be faithful with your finances and good stewards of investments made on your behalf.

Last month, our Investment team and Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees hosted the Pension Boards' second annual **Climate and ESG Symposium**. This event examined the links between ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) and racial justice, highlighted the progress we have made in this area, and featured speakers from leading financial services institutions on ESG risks and opportunities.

The Symposium consisted of four informative segments:

- a review of the Pension Boards timeline of responsible investing activities for members to-date, including areas of screening, ESG integration by managers, Impact investing, and corporate engagement;
- a dynamic panel discussion with a peer, an asset manager, and an attorney;
- a presentation from a global energy and sustainable development expert and author who shared many thought-provoking topics for consideration including the cost of failure to act on climate change and climate inequality; and
- a session from two of our current private asset managers on how their investments are providing solutions to reduce the negative effects of climate change.

These sessions were recorded and are [available for viewing on YouTube](#).

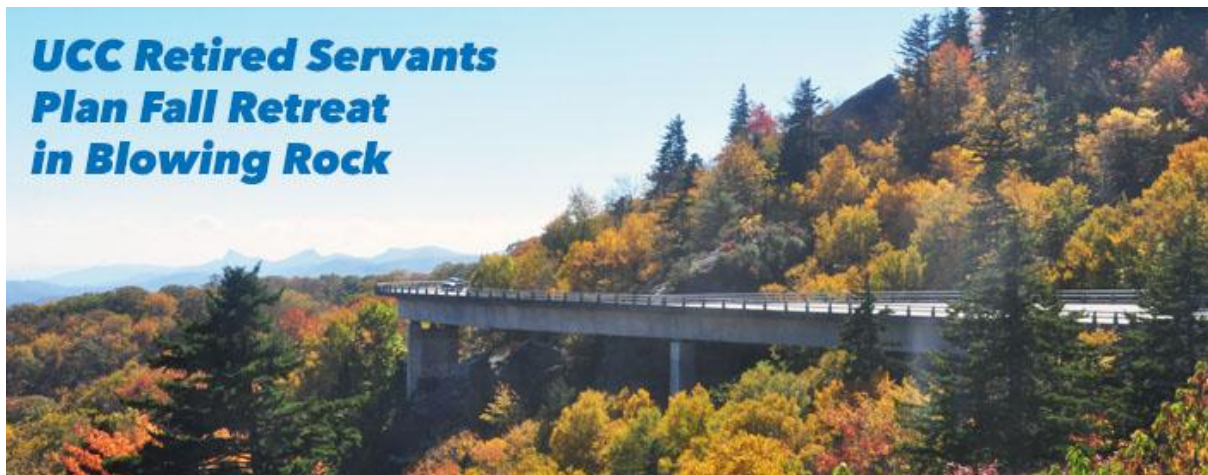
Invite the ONA Colation's Andy Lang to Your Congregation

Rev. Andy Lang ends 12 years of leadership in the UCC's Open and Affirming Coalition at the end of this year. Among his accomplishments: are more than doubling the number of certified ONA churches and rebuilding the Coalition's training programs for existing and future ONA churches. [Download this PDF](#) to learn about the educational experiences Andy can bring to your church before his retirement on December 31, 2022.

Trainings, Conferences & Events

Our Whole Lives offers new sexuality resources for parents, caregivers, churches

New and updated materials to help churches and parents teach about sexuality are now available from the United Church of Christ. Produced jointly by the UCC and the [Unitarian Universalist Association](#), they're the latest offerings from [Our Whole Lives](#). The two denominations have occasionally expanded and updated the unique curriculum and its companion, [Sexuality and Our Faith](#), since introducing it in the 1990s. [Learn more on the UCC website](#).



UCC Retired Servants Retreat

*October 10 - 12 (Mon. - Wed. with optional Sunday arrival)
Blowing Rock Conference Center*

- **Theme:** The ministry and spirituality of Howard Thurmond
- **Presenter:** Lerita Coleman Brown
- **Host Site:** Blowing Rock Conference Center, Blowing Rock, NC
- **Date:** October 10-12, 2022 (Monday-Wednesday, with optional Sunday arrival)

An Event for intellectual stimulation, spiritual enlightenment and reflection; and renewing friendships and/or making new friends for Retired UCC Clergy, Missionaries, Volunteer Ministry Workers and Spouses of the Southeast and Southern Conferences of the United Church of Christ.

Register now by contacting Jared Greer, Reservations Manager at Blowing Rock Conference Center jared@brccenter.org or by calling him at (828) 295-7813.



2022 UCC Southern Regional Women's Retreat

October 14-16, 2022

Camp Weed & Cervený Conference Center – Live Oak, Florida

Theme: God of Mystery – Spirit of Hope

Registration Deadline Extended to September 15.

Join women from across the South at the 2022 UCC Southern Regional Women's Retreat Oct. 14-16 at Camp Weed & Cervený Conference Center in Live Oak, Florida. The theme is "God of Mystery – Spirit of Hope" with the scripture Romans 12:12-13.

Please note that there will be no refunds for cancellations after Sept. 15, 2022. For more information and additional registration options, please visit <https://www.uccfla.org/floridauccwomen>.

Conference Calendar

September 15 @ 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm EDT
[Lunch and Learn with the Southern Region UCC](#)

September 15 @ 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm EDT
[Live Harp Meditations for Ministers](#)

September 17 @ 11:00 am - 2:00 pm CDT
[Upper Room UCC Fellowship in Nashville](#)

September 20 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT
[Clergy Conversations via Zoom](#)

September 27 - September 29
[UCC Clergywomen Leadership Event](#)

September 27 @ 9:30 am - 11:00 am EDT
[Zoom Conversation for Specialized Ministers](#)

September 27 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT
[Clergy Conversations via Zoom](#)

View the full calendar of events online: <https://www.secucc.org/events/>

Contact Us

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